

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

MAY 31, 2015

PASTORS, BISHOPS AND PRESBYTERS

Jim Stauffer

In **1 Tim. 3:1** we are told, *Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Verse 2* begins, *The bishop therefore must be,* and follows that with a somewhat lengthy list of qualifications. The importance of these qualifications is simple, he is to take care of the church of God. (see **verse 5**) It is further emphasized in Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders (**Acts 20:17**) when he said to them, **Acts 20:28** *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.*

There are three terms used interchangeably for this position in the church of the New Testament. An elder/presbyter (*presbuteros*) is defined as literally elder, older, senior. In the Christian churches those who being raised up....were appointed to have spiritual care of and exercise oversight over the churches. A pastor/shepherd (*poimen*) is a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks. Pastors guide as well as feed the flock. A bishop/overseer (*episkopos*) is a superintendent, officer in general charge of the church. A man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done are done rightly. (Definitions taken from Strong's Dictionary of Bible Words and Thayers Greek-English Lexicon)

We further learn each of these terms are descriptive of the same people. They describe different attributes and responsibilities of those men who hold the position of elder. For instance, Paul met with the elders of Ephesus. (**Acts 20:17**) He then referred to them as bishops in **verse 28**. Peter speaks to elders and tells them to, *tend (poimanio - shepherd) the flock which is among you taking the oversight (episkopeo - bishop) thereof. (1 Pet. 5:1,2)* He says the responsibilities of elders are to shepherd and oversee the flock.

To enhance our understanding of this office in the church we add to the qualifications and definitions, examples of usage in the New Testament text. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every city in **Acts 14:23**. When they went to Jerusalem to meet with the other apostles over the dissimulation created by the commanding of circumcision to the Gentiles by the Jews,

they also met with the elders. In **Acts 20:17** Paul met with the elders of Ephesus whom he later described as bishops in the church. Titus was directed to appoint elders in every city. (**Titus 1:5**) In every case the reference to those who fulfill this office is in the plural. Nowhere in the New Testament text is there a reference to a church being overseen by one elder. Paul addressed the congregation at Philippi, **Phil. 1:1** *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

Now notice one final characteristic of the responsibility of those holding this office. They are assigned a specific flock. The one *among you. (1 Pet. 5:2)* *All the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops. (Acts 20:28)* Remember Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in *every church. (Acts 14:23)* Each church is to function autonomously under the guidance of those elders. Elders, bishops and pastors then, are to be plural in every church and their responsibility is limited to that church or flock which is among them.

“Houston, we have a problem.” The religious world has ignored or misunderstood all of these principles of guidance offered in Scripture. These instructions were given by the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor. 2:9-13**) at the command of the Lord Himself. (**John 16:13**) We see churches that have a single pastor. We see bishops who fail to meet the qualifications concerning family. These same bishops oversee more than one flock or congregation. The violations of Scripture go from the qualifications to the description of responsibility on through the examples of implementation in the New Testament church.

Now ask yourself this question. If God has made it simple enough for a person with average education to understand, why can those educated in the best Seminaries in the land not understand it? Why do they promulgate this error without shame?

Only two answers are available. One is the inability to understand and the other is a rejection of God's plan in favor of man's. I will let you decide.

Matt. 15:9 *But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.*

Unequally Yoked

by L.A. Stauffer

Jehovah, in His covenant with Israel, strictly ordered them to avoid joining, blending, and mixing things that are different (see **Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9-11**). God forbade yoking an ox with a donkey, weaving flax and wool into the same cloth, and sowing two kinds of seed in the same field. We may not know fully why God issued these laws, but most agree that, in part, it illustrated the need to keep the nation holy—separate from heathens and their unholy practices.

The apostle Paul may allude to this ordinance when writing to brethren who had been known for their unholy alliances with idolatry and immoral practices. To the church at Corinth in his second letter, the apostle wrote: *“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers”* (**2 Cor 6:14**).

Paul clarifies his thought with a series of questions: *“For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion has light and darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has a temple of God with idols?”* (**2 Cor 6:14-16**). Christians, Paul is saying, are to separate themselves from the world of sin and touch no unclean thing (**2 Cor 6:17**).

The expression *“unequally yoked”* is one word in the Greek language and combines the words “different” and “yoke.” Its precise meaning denotes the tying or binding together of dissimilar things. This occurs when righteousness participates with iniquity, light shares things in common with darkness, and believers engage in the lifestyle of unbelievers. An unequal yoke results when Christians compromise with sin and partake in evil deeds.

Business. This occurs when Christians become partners with non-Christians in business and operate with them on dishonest principles. The “yoke” is not unequal and the partnership is not wrong unless the bond ties the believer to an unclean practice of the unbeliever.

Marriage. Unequal yokes develop in marriages when believers bound to unbelievers join their mates in unrighteous behavior. The Christian may sign a deceitful income tax return, drink a few beers at a New Year’s Eve party, engage in a night of dancing with friends, or don immodest apparel for a beach party. The “yoke” of marriage is not of itself unequal—for marriage is sacred, joined by God, and each is sanctified in the other (see **1 Cor 7:14**).

Denominationalism. A disciple may for a legitimate reason choose to visit services of a religious group that teaches and practices false doctrine. Even Paul attended the synagogues. And when invited the person, as I have done, might speak the truth. This Paul did. But to blend our voices in unscriptural singing or to contribute money to support false teachers and unauthorized practices is to yoke oneself unequally by endorsing and having fellowship with sin. To give them greeting in bidding them Godspeed is to share in their evil deeds (see **2 John 10-11**).

Friends. “Friends of the world” is not equivalent to “friendship of the world” (see **James 4:4**). Paul accepts association or company with fornicators, covetous, idolaters, etc. that are of the world (**1 Cor 5:9-10**). But to engage with them in their sins is friendship with the world itself and it creates *“enmity with God”* (**James 4:4**). Evil companions can corrupt good morals and when they do our company with them has become an unequal yoke and must cease. Both young and old need to be reminded not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of scoffers (see **Psa 1:1**).

Christians are in the midst of the world to let their lights shine before the world of ungodly and wicked men. They are to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul and are to be seen as lights in a crooked and perverse age (**Matt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:11; Phil 2:15**). And we cannot do this when we yoke ourselves unequally to the world in perverse practices.

taken from preachertrainingclasses.com website

About DENOMINATIONALISM

By David A. Beck

You don’t have to look very far around you to see that many men and women are disgusted with what they see as Christianity today. They see charlatans begging for money on TV and the mega-churches with all their entertainment and carnality trying to draw as many as will come to their church. They see a total disregard for the doctrine found on the pages of God’s word and each denomination doing as they please. It is easy to see the error of hundreds of denominations all claiming to teach God’s word and glean their authority from it, yet each one divided by differing practices and doctrines. It is easy to see that this is impossible. They leave the impression that the Bible is not understandable by the common man; yet, it is the Bible that brings us the doctrine of Christ that saves us from our sins. NO WONDER FOLKS ARE DISCOURAGED WITH THE “CHRISTIANITY” OF TODAY!

This discouragement and turning away from the Bible is really due to a lack of understanding about what the truth really is. They have accepted the false premise that is flaunted through denominationalism.

You see, in the midst of all of this confusion and error,

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there is the simple, undenominational, truth of God that leads to salvation. But, you have to strip away all the religious practices and doctrines that have been added through the centuries by men.

When you investigate the Bible; taking it just as it is, the inspired word of God, you can understand it. It is when one tries to read it and make sense of denominationalism that it becomes confusing. That is why denominational preachers will tell you that you need them (their clergy) to tell you what it means.

If some of these things have troubled you and you desire to return to the simple, uncomplicated religion of Christ, we are here to help you. If you have felt the desire to strip away all non-essential elements of religion and become simply a Christian, we can show you how. Many are not aware that such a possibility actually exists.

Let us begin with one fact. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and His coming, His mission, and His message were all foretold in the Old Testament (**Gen. 49:10; Isa. 53; Zech. 6:13; Jer. 31:31-33**).

The Old Testament was merely a shadow of what was to come (**Heb. 10:1ff**). Under this system the Jew learned about sin and its consequences by following God's instructions in offering physical animal sacrifices. Jehovah used this system to govern Israel until the Christ should come and establish the New Covenant which was for all mankind (**Gal. 3:19-29**).

The New Testament is the word of Christ. It reveals the religion of Christ (**Heb. 9:15-17**). By studying it we can learn all that we need to know about how one can be saved from their sins; how one can be a part of the church that Jesus built (**Matt. 16:18**); and how one is to worship God. There is nothing that any denomination can add that will help us to understand these things. For that matter, denominationalism, with its own creeds, leads us further away from the Bible if we follow their unique and individual concepts.

When we become aware that no denominations existed until hundreds of years after the close of the New Testament, there is a question that should haunt us. "Why do we need denominationalism today?" If you can learn of Christ and His church from just reading the New Testament, why would you want to be taught from the doctrines of denominationalism? If you can learn about the church of Christ; the one He promised to establish, and can be a part of that organization, why would you want to be a part of any other? If we can meet with others who honor God by worshiping Him in the simple ways that He has instructed us, why would we want to worship according to the adulterated pattern of denominations?

We see churches running around in circles trying to please the fleshly appetites of man. They have made

their assemblies places of entertainment and they have built their churches around satisfying man's physical wants instead of applying the doctrine of Christ to take care of their spiritual needs. They have tested the winds of popular opinion and embraced the immorality and sin of today calling it open-mindedness, love, and liberality with no concern for God's moral laws and instruction.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to meet and worship with folks who honor God and His word in all that they do? Wouldn't it be great to be taught, and have your family taught, the precepts of God's word without the corruption of denominational error? Wouldn't it be great to sincerely worship just like they did in the New Testament, without the pomp and entertainment that has become the hallmark of denominationalism? The good news is, YOU CAN.

There are thousands of churches around the world that all teach and practice the same thing; the unadulterated religion of Christ. They do this without any oversight from any board or headquarters because they each honor God's word and follow it. They wear no other name than the one Christ gave through His inspired word, the name Christian (**Acts 11:26; 26:28, 1 Pet. 4:16**) They worship in the same ways the Christians did in the New Testament (singing, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, teaching, and free-will offerings).

You can be a part of the church that Jesus purchased with His blood (**Acts 20:28**) and work and worship with a congregation of Christians who love and take care of each other as spiritual family.

DO YOU KNOW THE LORD IS COMING AGAIN?

Jim Stauffer

Peter reminded those who questioned the return of the Lord, of the flood in the days of Noah. As Jesus says in **Mat. 24**, those people went on their way eating and drinking and carrying on as if they had no concern. What happened then? **2 Pet. 3:5** *For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; 6 by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*

When will you take the message of the gospel seriously and make the necessary changes to your life? **2 Pet. 3:10** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

We see people everyday going about temporal tasks as if they are the most important things they have to do. They forget the Lord is coming. They forget when this life is over there is no more opportunity to make necessary changes. **James 4:14** *whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

IRENE HURD, MARY CZIRR, JAN PATRICK.

GRANT CLOTHIER IS AT HOME WHILE HIS WIFE, PAT CLOTHIER WILL BEGIN TREATMENTS FOR ESOPHAGEAL CANCER THAT HAS RETURNED.

JESSIE GIBSON IS AT HOME RECUPERATING AS IS J.R. DANIEL.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: GOSPEL OF JOHN

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: PREMILLENNIALISM

SUNDAY SERMON: ARE WE LISTENING TO THE LORD?



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10